

Homes Needed For Special Children

Yvette McCullough
Staff Reporter

"People have a lot of myths about adoption and adoption agencies," Marabeth Porter Plowman, Children's Counselor for Family Planning said. "They think that before you can adopt a child you have to own your own home, attend church regularly or make a certain income."

"Some of that used to be true but it's not true anymore," Plowman said. "They listen to what other people tell them and think that they have to meet a certain grade or that we have such high expectations."

"Agencies have changed over the years and have become more flexible," Plowman continued. "People that might have been turned away in the past are looked at twice today."

Plowman said that today one of the major

concerns of the agency when a couple wants to adopt is the security of their marriage.

"We do not approve of a shaky marriage," Plowman stated. "A couple should be married at least 2-5 years."

Today there is a need to find homes for children with special needs. She said since there is no longer a baby boom, there is a change of focus for the agency. She said the focus is on the type of children lost in the foster care system.

Children falling in the special needs category are black school age children, which make up the largest category, older school age children in general, and handicapped children.

"We need some black folks to adopt," Plowman said. "I'm not sure what it is, maybe the word hasn't gotten out."

Couples adopting special needs children can

also receive financial resources to help with medical costs, counseling and legal fees. Plowman said that there are about 3000 special needs children in foster care in this state.

Family Planning is one of three licensed agencies in this area to handle adoptions. The other two are the Forsyth County Social Services, and the Children's Home Society in Greensboro.

Persons wishing to adopt through the Family Planning go through various steps, according to Plowman. She said that first they would call for an appointment and if its a couple, both would need to come. She said she would explain the legal ends of adoption and if they're still interested they would take an application home to be filled out.

The Family Planning would conduct what they call a home study or a

period of time set aside to get to know about the family and see if they can meet the needs of the child. They would get their information from references, friends who see the couple socially and neighbors.

They would also check the kind of resources the family has and get a medical statement. The law requires that the couple have a check-up during this time period.

If they are approved by the agency's adoption committee there is usually a wait of about 2-3 years before they receive a child. However, there are exceptions to this, with older children or special children the wait may not really be that long.

During the last four years there have been changes and now single adults are allowed to adopt children. The person must be over 18 years of age and they usually

Bowman Named To Who's Who

Dr. Olivia T. Spaulding, Academic Dean at Livingstone College has announced that twenty-two students have been named to "Who's Who among students in American Universities and Colleges."

This national scholastic body honors college and university students who have been identified as outstanding scholars and campus leaders during their college careers.

According to Dean Spaulding, in order to meet these qualifications, the students must have at least a 3.0 over-all grade

point average; have good moral character; be active in several campus organizations; have at least one year study at the recommending institutions; and have been previously nominated to "Who's Who."

North Carolina students named to "Who's Who for 1977-78 are: Linda Bowman, biology major from Winston-Salem, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Bowman, education major from Jacksonville

daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Cree McIver, and Johnny McLean, political science major, from Clinton, son of Mr. and Mrs. Hilda Williams.



Marabeth P. Plowman, Children's Counselor at the Family Planning explains the adoptions procedures.

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Conference Discusses

Justice And The Poor

"Justice and the Poor" will be the theme of a Conference on Friday, April 21, 1978 sponsored by the North Central Legal Assistance Program. The Conference will be held at the St. Joseph's A.M.E. Church in Durham.

The Conference will have three aims: to examine legal problems confronting the poor, to educate the community about the law and legal system and, to discuss strategies for helping the poor to obtain justice. It will include a luncheon at 12:00 noon followed by workshops in consumer law, courts and government, criminal justice, family law, housing law, and public assistance.

Charles Daye, Professor of Law at the University of North Carolina Law School and President of the North Carolina Association of Black Lawyers will be the luncheon speaker. The workshop panels will include: James Kerr, Director of the Durham Housing Authority; Dan Hudgins, Director of the Durham County Department of Social Services; James Carr, Clerk of Court-Durham County; Ben Ruffin, Assistant to the Governor; and other lawyers, agency officials, and community workers.

This Conference will bring together a wide variety of legal and community resources to renew efforts to make our system of justice more responsive to the problems and needs of poor people. This is the first Conference of this type in this area.

Advance registrations are \$3.00 and include the luncheon and choice of two workshops. Registrations received after Tuesday, April 18, 1978 will require a \$5.00 fee.

The North Central Legal Assistance Program is a nonprofit corporation funded by the Legal Services Corporation in Washington, D.C. It provides free legal assistance in a wide range of civil matters to persons who cannot afford to hire a private lawyer. In addition, it provides community legal education programs designed to make poor people aware of their legal rights and responsibilities. The program, formerly known as the Legal Aid Society of Durham County, provides service to more than 50,000 eligible persons in Durham, Vance, and Granville Counties.

For more information about the Conference, call Darryl Smith, Conference Coordinator, at 688-6396.

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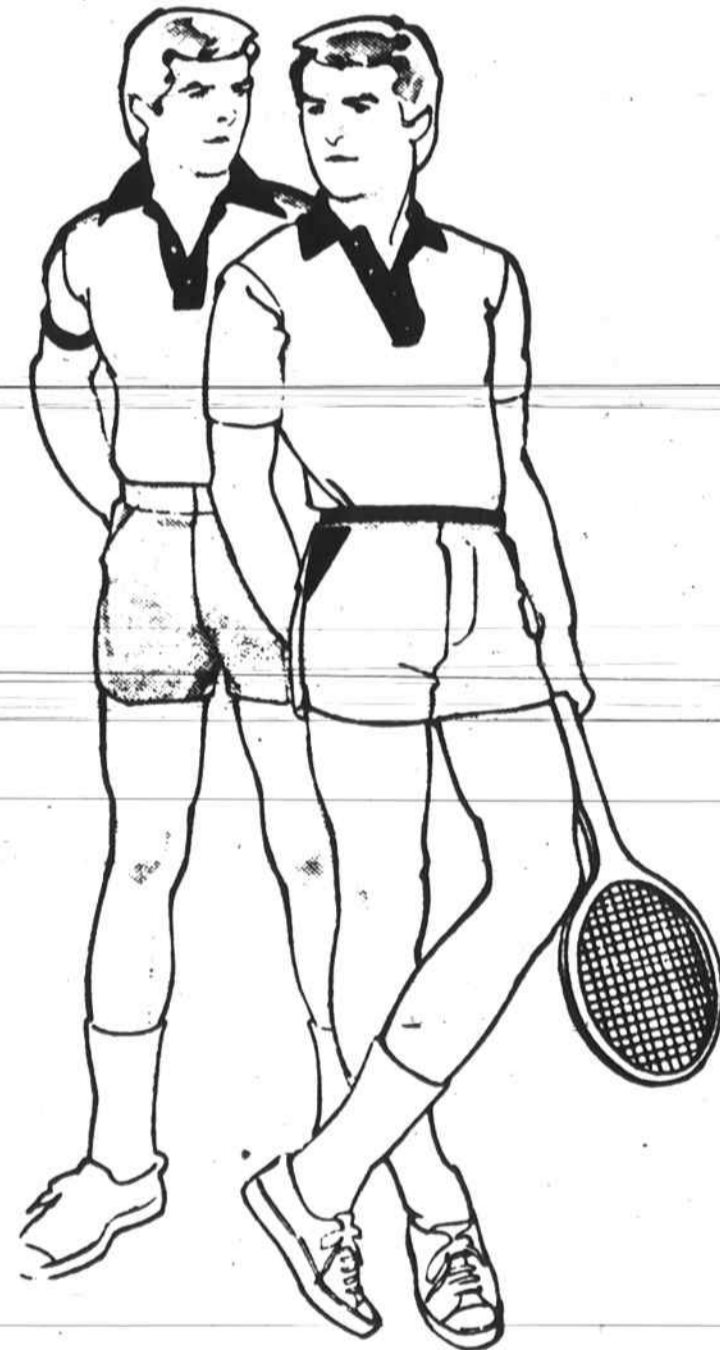
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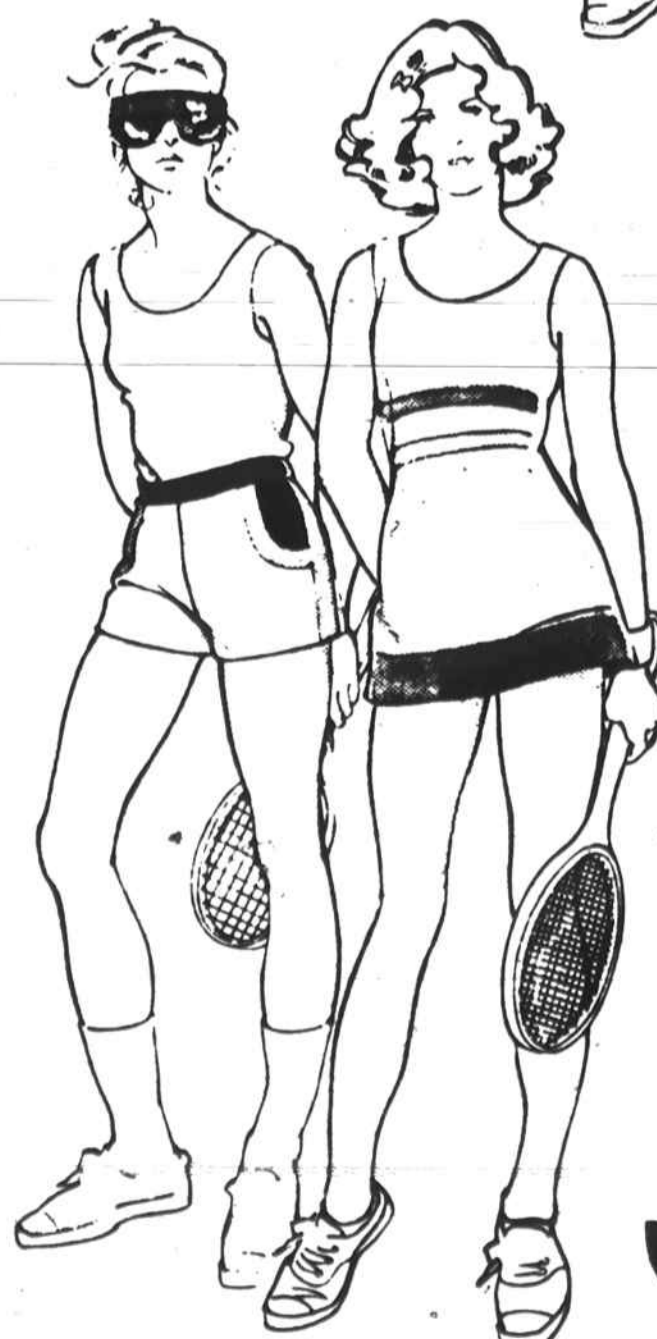
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